

Christine Natrass
Yale University

I am a graduate student in my third year at Yale University in the Harris/Caines group (STAR). I got my bachelor's at Colorado State University, getting majors in Physics, Biochemistry, and Physical Science with minors in Chemistry, Math, and German, cum laude, Goldwater scholar, blah blah blah... I started my university studies wanting to be a biophysicist but after doing research in bioinformatics, electron paramagnetic resonance on proteins, antihydrogen trapping, and resonance ultrasound spectroscopy (senior thesis topic), I realized that physics is more fun and smells a lot better. During my undergraduate studies, I did research internships at the University of North Carolina (2 months), Leiden Universiteit (5 months), and CERN (2 months). I was born in Lexington, KY, lived in Madison, WI for five years, and then spent about twelve years in Colorado in various places before moving to Connecticut for grad school. My hobbies include brewing beer and wine, bike riding, cooking, weight lifting, archery, rugby, quilting/sewing, running, playing cello, and trying to design science experiments with household products (my mother never liked that hobby).

The primary thing I don't like about being at Brookhaven - and would, therefore, try very hard to change - is that it is hard to be here without a car. The food stinks, is generally unhealthy, and is way, way overpriced - both at Berkner Hall and the Brookhaven Center. The kitchens in the dorms are under-equipped (or unequipped), and getting off-site for food is nearly impossible without a car. Even though this is a 24-hour lab, food isn't available during most hours of the day. (Stale sandwiches in vending machines don't count.) I, at least, am much happier and productive when I'm well fed and eating healthy. There is no store on site to buy necessities (like shampoo, toothbrushes, and deodorant) like they have at CERN so if you forget something when you pack and you have no car, you just have to be stinky - which is not in the interest of anyone. While in principle transportation services within BNL and off site are available, the schedules aren't actually designed around when people need to use them. For instance, the on site shuttle service starts after the night shift ends and does not go until late enough in the evening for people on the evening shift to get back to the dorms or people on the night shift to get to their shift. The shuttle to Ronkonkoma isn't available on weekends, when people who are stuck on site without a car might actually like to go in to NYC for a day. The shuttle service only runs twice a day and if those times don't work for you, you have to beg a ride. If one has to walk out to the ring for shift, large stretches of the road have no shoulder, no sidewalk, and no lights next to the road - this is begging for an accident, especially since we're encouraged not to walk in the grass because of ticks. There is no indoor, long term bike storage so that people can store bikes on site while they aren't here without letting the bike sit out in the rain and get rusty. To my knowledge, there is no place on site to buy replacement bike tires or a tire pump available for general use. There isn't enough housing for women

and women have to call in to make reservations for the dorms much earlier than men or else we won't be able to stay in the dorms, even when men's dorms are sitting empty. I could go on. We all know it kinda stinks to be on site, especially without a car. I don't know how much I could actually do about this, but it'd be hard to make it worse.